

DOWNTOWN BEND PARKING STUDY – INITIAL STRATEGY CONSIDERATIONS (DRAFT)

Rick Williams Consulting (RWC) was retained by the City of Bend to conduct an overall evaluation of the downtown parking system and develop a comprehensive Strategic Parking Management Plan. The RWC team also includes Kittelson & Associates (KAI) and Anne George Facilitation (AG).

The evaluation entailed review of existing parking operations, previous study findings, public engagement/outreach and comprehensive data collection. To date, these initial strategies have been informed by in-depth discussions and five topic-specific work sessions with the Downtown Stakeholder Advisory Committee (DSAC) formed for the project.

The consultant believes these recommended strategies respond to the unique environment, goals, and objectives of Downtown Bend. Strategies are offered within the context of recently completed data findings and consistency with Guiding Principles developed and approved by the DSAC.

Strategies presented are not intended at this time to be representative of the final outcomes and recommendations of the DSAC, but only a listing provided by the Consultant for review, discussion and refinement.

A. SUMMARY FINDINGS – SYSTEM PERFORMANCE

- a. **Summer** is definitely the **peak season** (about 12.5% higher than Spring) for number of vehicle trips downtown and use of the supply.
- b. **Parking Behavior:** There does not seem to be any significant change in **parking behavior** between the two seasons (either for employees or visitors). This would include average duration of stay, number of employee permits on street, rates of violation, and turnover.
- c. **High Use Areas (On-Street):** In the spring and summer, there is a defined area of high parking activity (very constrained and sustained at 85%+) in the downtown core or center, which operates much differently than the east side of downtown (which was underutilized in spring and summer). As such, the idea of management by parking zone may make sense.

- d. **Off-Street Parking Availability:** Even though there is higher parking activity in the summer, the off-street system still has a meaningful amount of unused parking, particularly in the parking garage.
- e. **Shared Use:** There are opportunities to find and identify shared use facilities for off-street parking, for example three publicly controlled lots, which could accommodate employees (and off-peak events).
- f. **The Mirror Pond lots** are consistently constrained and strategies should be developed specifically to address this.
- g. **Parking Plan:** There is a finite supply of parking in downtown Bend. Currently, there is availability in both on-street and off-street parking supplies. New systems need to be implemented to direct intended users into available supplies. If Bend is to have a customer first parking management system, the system must both appeal to and accommodate visitors and identify safe and accessible parking for employees and residents.

All the strategies that follow are intended to be listed in a logical and iterative order. However, the timing and final order of implementation will be further reviewed and refined with the PMT and DSAC.

B. POLICY AND ORGANIZATIONAL ACTION STRATEGIES

Incorporating parking system management into the City's development policy ensures that the goals of the Parking Management Plan can be met.

1. Formalize the Guiding Principles as policies within the parking and transportation system plan.
2. Adopt the 85% Rule as the standard for measuring performance of the parking supply and triggering specific management strategies and rate ranges.
3. Centralize Parking Management. Consolidate the management and administration of parking management within a single division for Parking Services. *Parking issues are too complicated and prevalent for status quo approach to management and implementation.*
4. Develop a job description and submit a service package to create and hire a position of Downtown Parking Manager/Coordinator for the City of Bend.

5. Continue the role and function of the Downtown Parking Advisory Committee (DPAC) consisting of downtown stakeholders to assist in program implementation and review.
6. Evaluate moving forward with data collection effort(s) to measure parking impacts in select neighborhoods adjacent to the downtown as well as costs/feasibilities of neighborhood area permit programs (i.e., administration, process and stakeholder education).
7. Explore and develop funding options for maintaining the existing parking supply and funding future growth.
8. Establish a policy for adjusting rates (on and off-street).

B. CODE-RELATED ACTION STRATEGIES

These strategies would revise the municipal code to support long-term planning and efforts to “right-size” parking in new development. These strategies will be developed in Phase 2 of the large city-wide parking study, integrating specific recommendations related to the downtown. Recommendations from this process will be brought back to the DSAC for review and input.

C. PARKING MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES - OPERATIONS

9. Establish business-to-business outreach and communications on parking issues, education and planning; a *Customer First* Partnership with the Downtown Bend Business Association.
 - Employee education program(s)
 - Maps and other visitor communications materials to identify parking availability and “rules of use.”
 - Parking/visitor information kiosks.
 - Co-marketing opportunities with retail shops, hotels, restaurants, event venues.
 - Alternative mode education and incentives.
 - Interactive website.
 - Tie all information to new brand/logo (see Strategy 15).



10. Identify off-street shared-use opportunities based on data from the 2016 parking study. Establish goals for transitioning employees, begin outreach to opportunity sites, negotiate agreements, and assign employees to facilities.
11. Attrition the number of 2 Hour or as Otherwise Specified on-street stalls in coordination with parking availabilities identified in Strategy 10, above.
12. Implement variable rate pricing for employee permits based on location, demand and availability of parking. This is intended to create pricing differentials between “premium” and underutilized locations.
13. Establish two distinct on-street parking management zones within the downtown parking district. Use 2016 occupancy data to define the boundaries (e.g., central core, east zone).
 - 2 Hour parking (base standard) in the core zone.
 - 3 Hour parking (base standard) in “east” zone.
 - Limited employee permit parking in “east” zone (coordinated with Strategies 10 and 11, above).
14. Consider eliminating first two hours free at Mirror Pond lots.
 - Implement progressive hourly parking (very low first two hours, increasing each additional hour).
15. Create a critical path timeline to a new parking brand/logo that can be utilized at all City-owned lots and shared supplies and in parking marketing/communications.
16. Standardize the design of on-street parking signage. Consider incorporating the new brand/logo into on-street signage (per Strategy 16, above).
 - a. Make all Core zone parking 2HR.
 - b. Make all non-core zone parking 3HR or 3Hour or by Permit
 - c. Reduce the number of No Limit stalls in the study zone.
17. Rename all publicly owned/controlled lots and garages by address.

*Example: On-street “Brand”
Springfield, OR*



18. Deploy upgrade of on-street parking signage (per Strategies 15 and 16, above).

19. Establish best-practice protocols and performance metrics for existing enforcement personnel and support enforcement with appropriate technology.

20. Expand bike parking network to create connections between parking and the downtown to encourage employee bike commute trips and draw customers to downtown businesses.



- a. Bike lanes
- b. On-sidewalk bike parking
- c. Bike Corrals (in street or public/private plazas)
- d. On private property (interior employee parking)



21. Develop a reasonable schedule of on-going data collection to better assess performance of the downtown parking supply and support 85% Occupancy standard for decision-making.

22. Evaluate on-street pricing in high occupancy areas (85%+).

23. Evaluate eliminating free parking in the public garage, moving to progressive rate pricing for all hours of parking (e.g., hourly rates, evening, weekend, overnight and event rates).

D. PARKING MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES: INFRASTRUCTURE

These strategies build upon and are facilitated by work completed in Strategies 1 - 24.

24. Upgrade/improve entryway identification signage at downtown Public Parking garage.



25. Install parking stall counter system in Public Parking garage. Connect to signage recommended in Strategy 24.

26. Solicit firms to establish wayfinding and dynamic signage systems in the public right of way, integrated with the off-street system using City parking brand developed in Strategy 15.



- Design signage.
- Identify appropriate access portals for locating signage
- Explore real time communications linking multiple sites, apps, websites and other resources for dissemination of information and customer use.

27. Evaluate and implement solutions to “safety” impediments that create inconvenient and inefficient connections between customers/users and parking supply (e.g., lighting, sidewalk/pathway connections, lot condition, etc.).

28. Explore expanding access capacity with new parking supply and/or transit.

- a. Identify possible new parking sites downtown and remote (for public and/or private partnerships).
- b. Explore improved shuttle/circulator connections.

29. Develop cost forecasts for preferred parking supply and transit/shuttle options (coordinated with Strategy 7).

30. Initiate new capacity expansion (as necessary and feasible).

The City and DSAC may elect to reorder, accelerate, or moderate strategies depending on community support and consensus, opportunity, and/or funding. All strategies will require consistent and dedicated management with active participation by the private sector.